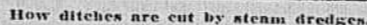


Showing swamps east of Rockies. They equal Ohio, Indiana and Illinois.



Canal through Dismal Swamp, showing partial reclamation.

has a valley several hundred miles

long, and on that basin there are some millions of acres which the government geographers have just finished mapping. Great drainage works are going on there, and these include some of the biggest swamp reclamation schemes of the Union. A few years ago the water was worth nothing, as it was as it is reclaimed. Water now (from \$100 to \$1,000 an acre, and some of it is already covered with farms where asparagus, celery, tomatoes and potatoes are raised for shipment to San Francisco and other parts of the West. I have seen some of the great sluiceways, dikes about an island and pumped out the water, and that island has the largest asparagus farm of the world. They have made great drains which have redeemed lands now devoted to wheat and corn. They are used with the water, and the surplus is shipped from there to the East. Some millions of dollars have already been expended upon that work, and now that the surveys have been completed the drainage projects will increase.

In talking with the geographers as they walked through the Sacramento Valley one of the old men told me that the trouble there was that man had taken possession of the country about a thousand years too soon. For ages past, nature has been bringing down the earth washings from the mountains, but she has not, about one thousand years, finished her job. The silt has lodged along the banks of the Rivers and built up the land there. Long troughs on each side which the floods overflowed. The troughs cannot be reclaimed, but channels must be cut, and the land so protected that the streams will not overflow. Some of

the islands which have been redeemed at the mouth of the Sacramento will have to be taken away and a channel sufficiently large for the river created.

An Empire on the Mississippi.

About the same might be said of the Lower Mississippi Valley. It is still earth in the making. The Gulf of Mexico

Earth in the making. The Gulf of Mexico, the scientists tell me, once extended more than 1,000 miles farther north, and all the land of the delta is made up of the rich earth washed down by the great river. The Mississippi built up the delta of the Gulf and forced the sea's waves and currents to drop the streams have dropped their deposits close to their banks, and have thus gradually built troughs on each side of the river. The troughs are so deep that we now find the swampy Mississippi carries more stuff into them at every flood. It comes down loaded with the richest materials of the uplands and deposits them in a great delta. The part of it there, from the

Missouri alone is estimated, enough soil to make a sheet one mile square and higher than that of Washington Monument is annually dropped into the Mississippi. Within this same period the Missouri carries down a pile of equal area which is 460 feet high, and this is mixed with billions of tons of rich mud taken from the State of Indiana, Illinois and Iowa.

This work has been going on throughout the ages, and the earth washings are now increased by bad cultivation. They are carrying away

the best elements of our soil, and much of these are stored up in the swamps. Indeed, the swamps contain the richest fertilizing materials on earth. They are full of the stuff for which our farmers give their hard dollars to the chemical companies. They are loaded with

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In the Delta. And what a mighty delta the Mississippi has! It is one of the greatest on earth. You could lose that of the Nile and its lands would make a second Egypt. The delta of the Ganges. It is many miles wide and is as long as from New York to Cleveland. The swamps in it comprise altogether over twenty million acres. There are so rich that any forty acres would support a family. The lower part of the delta has millions of acres which will raise sugar and rice. North of them are millions that could be devoted to cotton, and still farther north millions planted for corn. We all know that Holland was born by diking the sandhills of the North Sea. This land might be diked the same way, but it would be walling

And just here I would say that the draining of the swamp lands of the United States should be in the hands of Uncle Sam; indeed, it will need to be so controlled before the work can be done in a proper manner. As it is now, 30 per cent. of these lands are in the hands of private parties. They were relinquished by the general government to the States about 40 years ago on the understanding that the States would inaugurate works to reclaim them. The States sold them out to individuals on the same understanding, and as a result tens of thousands and millions of acres have been sold to the government for a few cents per acre.

And which have cost the government the States tens of millions of dollars. The Yazo basin is 300 miles long, 100 miles wide, and 100 miles of levees along the Mississippi alone. The Yazo basin has an unbroken dike, and there is a great dam around the basin of the St. Francis. The government, national and State, has spent millions of dollars the last generation to cage the waters of the river. And the swamps will have to be handled carefully to keep the cages intact.

Moreover, no State will allow a sister State to drain its surplus flood waters into its own territory, so the farmers will kick against receiving surplus water from their neighbors. There are some of the problems which confront the drainage proposition, and make it feasible except through co-operation and national action. It is an interstate and national question. I am told by Senator Newlands that he has treated of this matter in his new bill for the management of the waterways of the Nation.

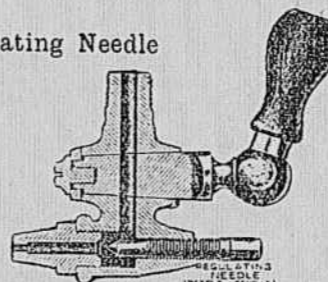
Drainage by States.

Some of the States have already authorized the drainage of the swamps, and some have granted concessions to

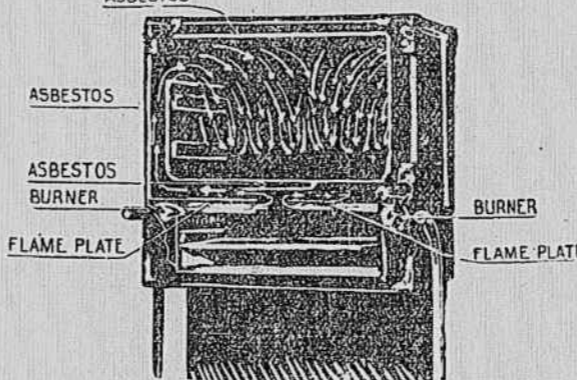
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This Dismal Swamp and the great marsh lands which lie adjacent to it would be very profitable if they should be reclaimed. They are close to the water routes to Boston and New York, and would be a winter vegetable garden for those cities and other parts of the north.

Swamp Lands of the North.
The swamp lands of the North are of enormous extent and they are being reclaimed in many of the States. Some of the swamps of northern Ohio were once under water. They are now covered with orchards and farms and are worth a hundred dollars an acre and upward per acre. Wisconsin, which has enough swamps to drown the state of Connecticut or flood the whole island of Porto Rico, has patches of soil reclaimed from the swamp which produce twenty tons of cabbagees to the acre. Illinois has some spots fattier than her fattest corn fields and Minnesota is doing an enormous work in making dollars grow on her wet lands. The great tract which belonged to the Chippewa Indians, lying in the northern part of that state bordered by the Lake Superior and Lake of the Woods, has been recently surveyed by the government geographers and their maps outlining the possible canals and ditches now lie before me. In preparing them the geographers had to make their way over floating bog and travel by launch, canoe, on foot and on horseback for hundreds of miles. Much of the swamp was frozen, and they carried the pack on which they lived along on a sled. They found farmers living on some of the islands of that great swamp and grazing dairy cattle there. The butter could be gotten out in boats or over the ice, and they brought several cents above the market price when shipped to New York.

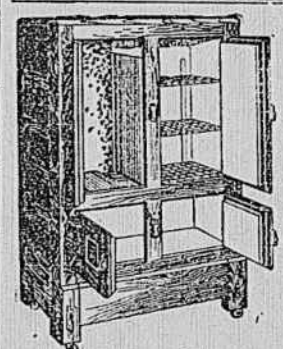
Two Dollars and Upward Per Acre.

As to the cost of these great reclamation schemes, the geographers estimate that those of Minnesota would range all the way from 70-cents to \$1 per acre, and it is safe to say that there are many million acres in different parts of the country which could be drained for \$2, while others might cost as much as \$20 per acre or more. Much of the draining can be done by gravity, and some of the tidal marshes, will be controlled by flood gates and dikes. In other places there will have to be great pumping stations, and in others, as in Holland, the windmills will aid in the work. As to this, may write in the future.

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